

## CLAIMS

1. An image processing apparatus including storing means for storing image data and performing an output process based on the image data stored in the storing means, comprising:

means for designating the image data stored in the storing means and accepting an instruction for concealment of the designated image data;

means for concealing the designated image data based on the accepted instruction; and

means for nullifying unconcealed image data.

2. The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

means for detecting whether or not processing means for processing the image data is provided and an operation state thereof; and

means for determining a concealing method based on detected results.

3. An image processing apparatus including storing means for storing image data and performing an output operation based on the image data stored in the storing means, comprising:

means for designating the image data stored in the storing means and accepting an instruction for concealment of the designated image data;

means for detecting whether or not processing means for processing the image data is provided and an operation state thereof;

means for determining a concealing method based on detected results; and

means for concealing the designated image data by means of the determined method based on the accepted instruction.

4. The image processing apparatus according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein

the concealing method is encrypting the image data, further comprising:

means for decoding encrypted image data in the case of performing an output operation based on the image data.

5. The image processing apparatus according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein

the concealing method is setting of authentication information to the image data, further comprising:

means for accepting authentication information;

means for verifying the authentication information set to the image data with the accepted authentication information; and

means for permitting the output process of the image data in the case where the authentication information set to the image data matches the accepted authentication information.